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BOB BEERS

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The many aspects of **sharks and shark research** are covered in a friendly and informational children's program (ages 6 and older) at the South Fork Natural History Museum and Nature Center in Bridgehampton, 10:30 a.m. Saturday. Kids will learn about tagging sharks and methods used to catch sharks for research. \$10, \$7.50 for ages 6-12, includes museum admission. Call 631-537-9735 to reserve. sofo.org.



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READ PHOTOGRAPHY

Sweet Adelines will perform at the SingStrong Festival, an a cappella celebration at Adelphi University.

perfect harmony

Big names instrumental in bringing a cappella to LI

BY JANELLE GRIFFITH
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The pitch is back — and this time, it can be heard perfectly on Long Island.

Some of the biggest names in a cappella, including reality television stars from the Lifetime series “Pitch Slapped,” will converge on Adelphi University Friday to Sunday for the 11th SingStrong festival.

“SingStrong is all about communities,” says Jonathan Minkoff, festival founder and executive producer. “Long Island has a growing a cappella community that deserves its own world-class festival.”

The three-day, all-vocal event brings together singers of different levels for concerts, voice lessons and competitions.

Among this year's headliners is Diana Preisler, frontwoman of Blue Jupiter and star of “Pitch Slapped”; Virginia-based gospel group Resound; jazz-inspired duo Free Play; Georgia native Julia Easterlin, and Classic

SINGSTRONG FESTIVAL

WHEN | WHERE Friday-Sunday, Adelphi University, 1 South Ave., Garden City

INFO singstrong.org; newyork.singstrong.org

ADMISSION \$30 single event to \$200 for an all-weekend VIP pass; student, teacher, senior and group discounts available.

Sounds, a New York doo-wop quintet. Sweet Adelines, an all-female group that specializes in barbershop harmony, will perform rock classics and Broadway show tunes, and Highland Voices, a New Jersey a cappella group that competes on “Pitch Slapped,” also will be there.

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

SingStrong is for a cappella what Comic Con is for superhero fans. It is also a jumping-off place for lesser-known acts.

Pentatonix, a Grammy Award-winning five-member a cappella group from Texas, got its start on the SingStrong stage in 2011. In between being hired to appear at SingStrong and performing at the festival, the group won season 3 of the reality competition “The Sing Off.”

“Part of what makes SingStrong exciting is seeing truly excellent groups — not just popular ones,” Minkoff says. “That takes curation that isn't profit-driven. Every year, SingStrong introduces audiences to the next Pentatonix.”

LOCAL PERFORMERS

Minkoff, a New York City resident, and co-producer Michael Miller, of Wantagh, are graduates of Baldwin High School, and still consider themselves Long Islanders.

The pair have always wanted to bring the festival to the Island. So this year, they partnered with Adelphi University as a means to not just highlight national names in a cappella, but to mentor



BENJAMIN OLIVER

Classic Sounds, one of the groups performing at the SingStrong festival, is a New York doo-wop quintet.

local talent.

Stephanie McKenna, co-founder of Adelphi University's a cappella group Paws & Rewind, says a cappella is more than just "oohs and aahs." A cappella requires the singer to have perfect pitch, rhythm, vibrato and tone, among other things. Beatboxing, or drumming with the mouth, which is arguably even more challenging than singing a cappella, is also used popularly in the genre.

"What I love about being part of the a cappella group is it is a totally different dynamic from using instruments," says McKenna, 23, of North Massapequa. "It's a little tricky to adjust. Getting all the voices to blend is a growing process."

As musical director of the 15-member Paws & Rewind student group, McKenna, who sings soprano, is responsible for making sure the voices blend. She'll have help in developing this skill at SingSong from the likes of Kaila Mullady, international beatbox champion, who will lead a seminar during the three-day event. Each class instructor is a leader in a cappella, recording or arranging.

Aside from the educational opportunities SingSong offers, McKenna says she is most looking forward to simply being inspired by other



ILAN HAREL

Blue Jupiter is fronted by "Pitch Perfect" star Diana Preisler.

groups.

"Seeing the things that they do, hearing the sounds they create, it definitely has inspired us to better what we have done," McKenna says. "We all have great ideas, but it helps to get inspired by these groups and see what they bring to the table."



GILLIAN ARNDT

Julia Easterlin is a Georgia native who will lend her voice to the SingStrong festival.

FOR MORE

WHAT International Championship of the Collegiate A Cappella Quarterfinal, featuring groups from New York University, Columbia University, Fashion Institute of Technology, Fordham University and Wagner University.

WHEN | WHERE 7 p.m. Feb. 27. Hofstra University, 900 Fulton Ave., Hempstead, John Cranford Adams Playhouse

INFO varsityvocals.com

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